

with Chelsea in the FA Cup final in 1970 and the replay had been at Old Trafford on the following Wednesday, the same night that Man City had won the European Cup Winners' Cup against Gornik Zabrze of Poland. The Leeds and Chelsea footballers were probably souvenirs of that FA Cup final and my dad had picked them up for nothing from a mate in the pub, an unsold token of a long ago final, but we kept them with us when we moved house. I'm fairly certain my dad didn't buy them for us; in fact, all my dad ever gave us was sweet FA. That's not really true. In a fit of generosity he did buy me a Celtic football mug at Manchester airport when I was six (like a good Irish Catholic boy), which is when my affiliation with Celtic started. There's a heady mixture; Celtic and Manchester City.

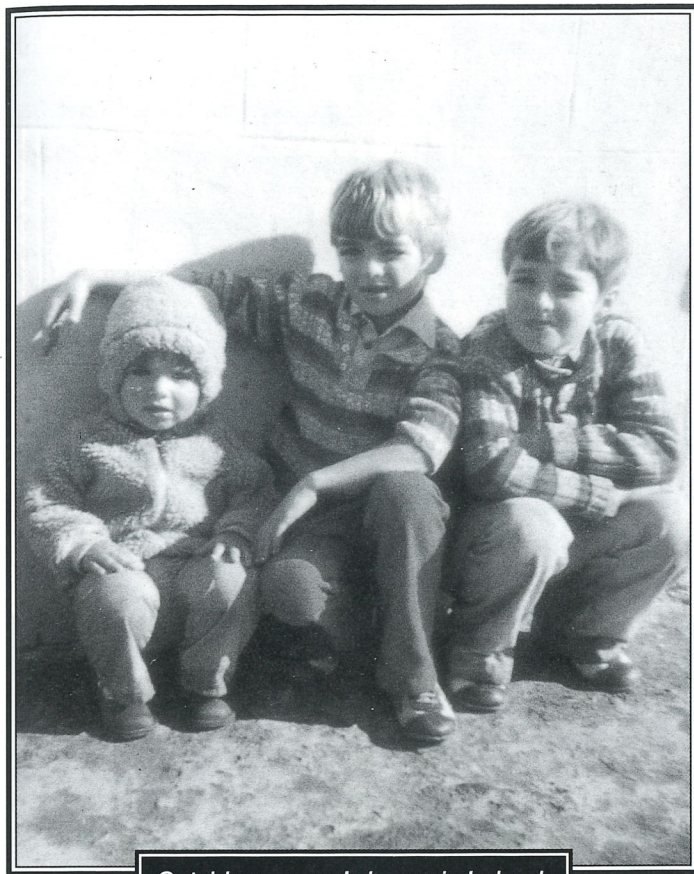
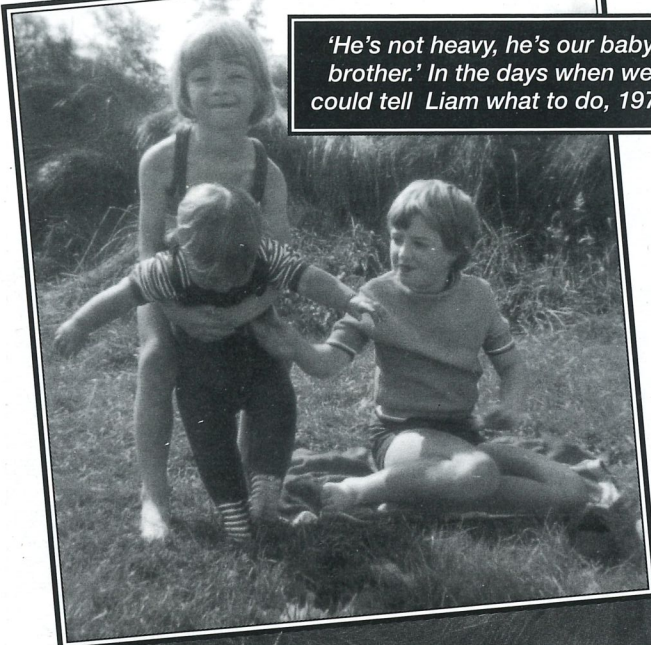
A change of house meant a new school and we started at St Bernard's Catholic primary school on Burnage Lane. I liked it a lot better there and it was nice that my old friend from Longsight, Joey McGrath, moved to Burnage at the same time as us. The council were pulling down a lot of the old streets in Longsight and rehousing all the families in council properties in that area. In fact, Joey and I went all the way through school together up to the age of sixteen.

We settled in well round Burnage and played outside a lot more than we could in Longsight. Not that everything was rosy for me – I got bullied by this kid at the top of the street. Paul Hewitt was the same age as me, but a lot bigger, and he made my life hell. I couldn't stand the sight of him, maybe because he seemed to get everything he wanted and all his own way most of the time. He'd grass you up and tell tales on you to save his own skin. He was clever and calculating but in a weird way very funny and sarcastic. Our Noel was very similar at the time. I admit I was



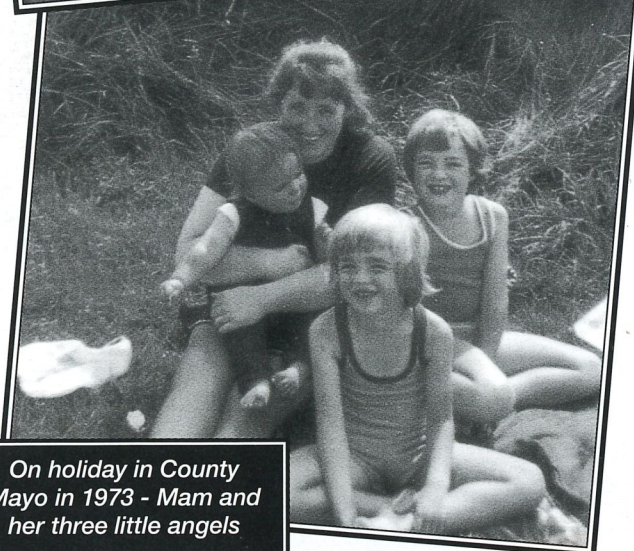
*Me and our Noel, 1971*

*'He's not heavy, he's our baby brother.' In the days when we could tell Liam what to do, 1973*

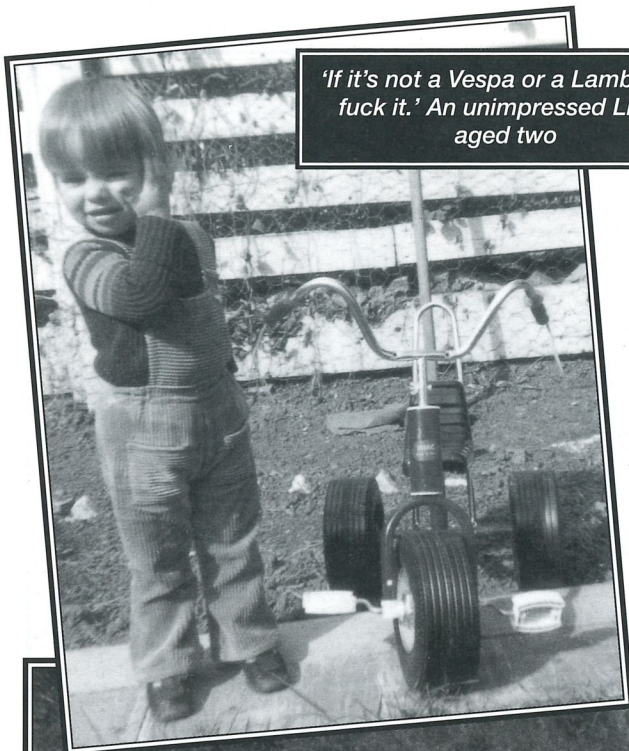


*Outside our gran's house in Ireland, 1974. Liam's still wearing the same style coat now*

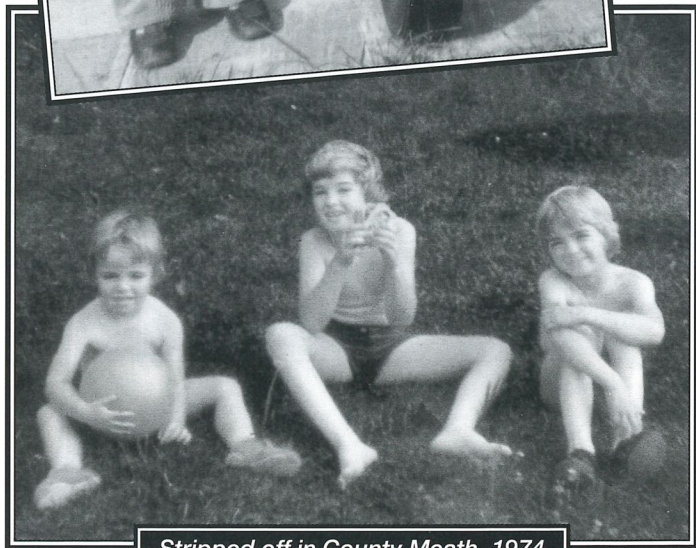
*On holiday in County Mayo in 1973 - Mam and her three little angels*







*'If it's not a Vespa or a Lambretta,  
fuck it.' An unimpressed Liam,  
aged two*

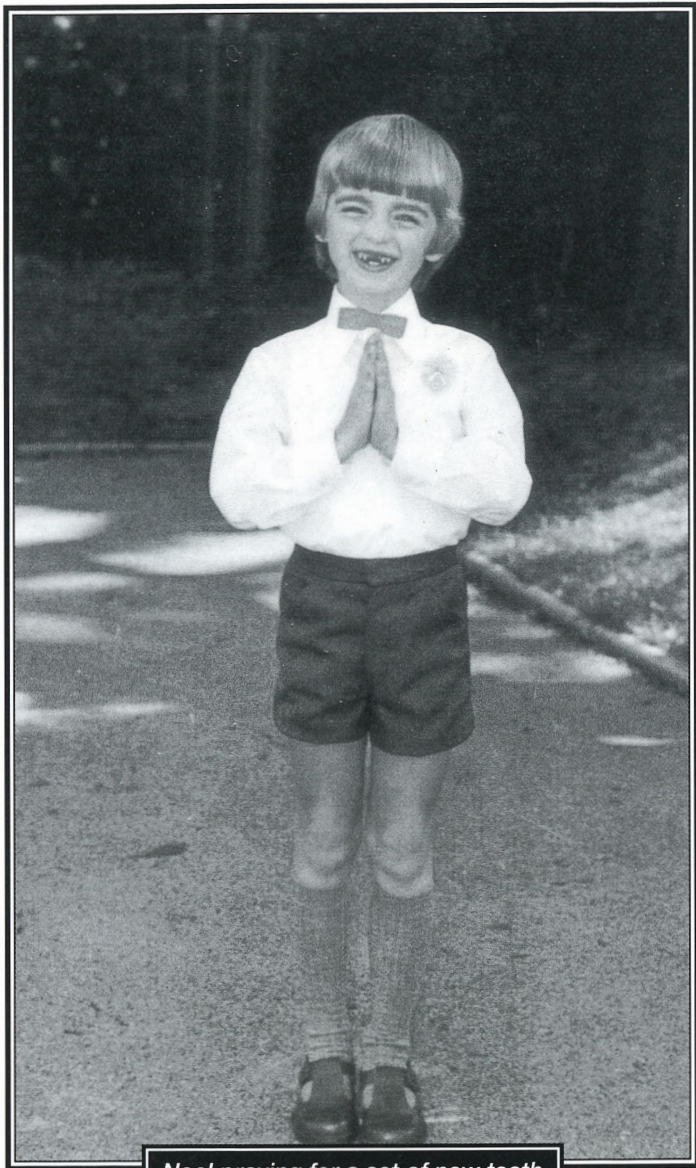


*Stripped off in County Meath, 1974*



*My first communion, 1973*





*Noel praying for a set of new teeth  
at his first communion, 1974*

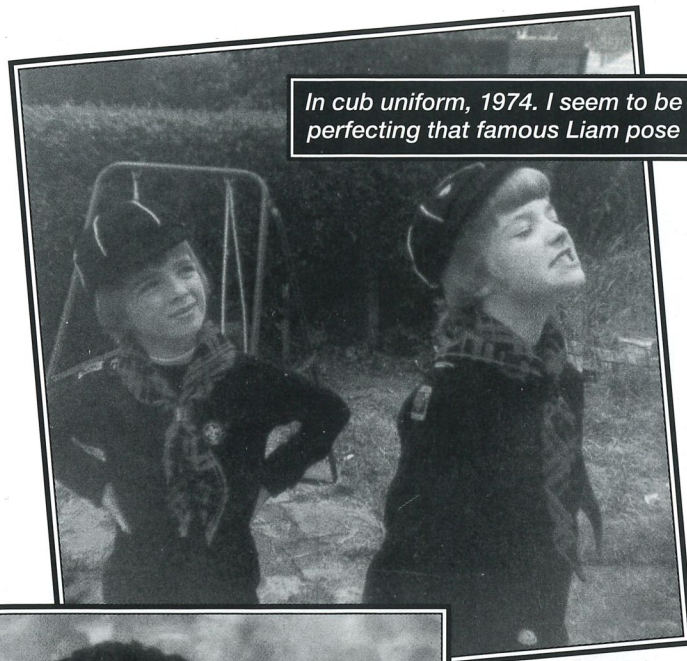


*'The Weetabix kid' looking full of  
grace at his first communion, 1979*

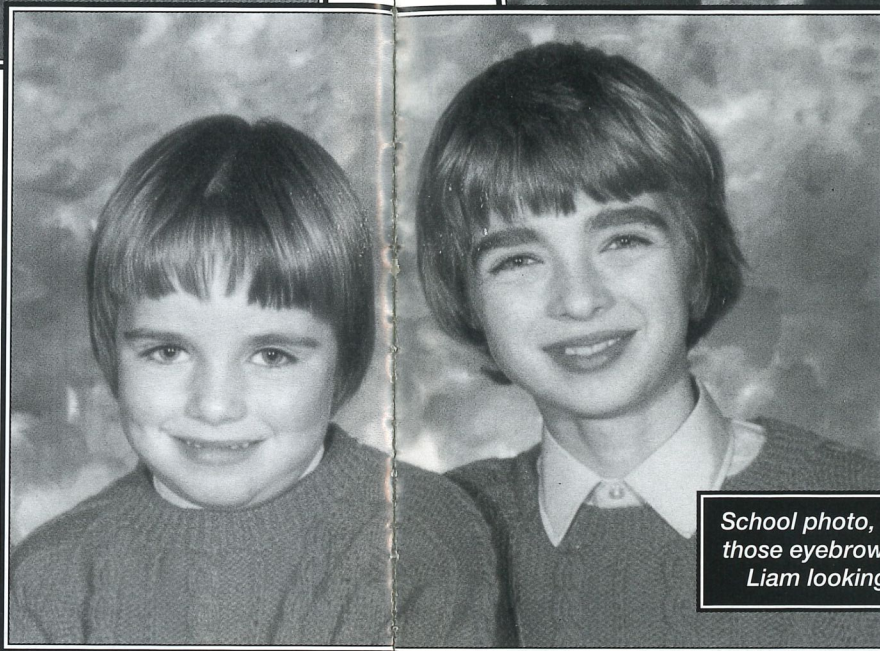




*School photo of me  
and our Noel, 1973 –  
before Liam followed  
us there too*



*In cub uniform, 1974. I seem to be  
perfecting that famous Liam pose*



*School photo, 1977. Noel displaying  
those eyebrows at a young age and  
Liam looking decidedly chubby*



*In Grandma Sweeney's house.  
Liam reads his latest book to us*



*With a stray dog we found in  
County Meath. Our Noel had two  
broken wrists – not much guitar  
playing done on that holiday*

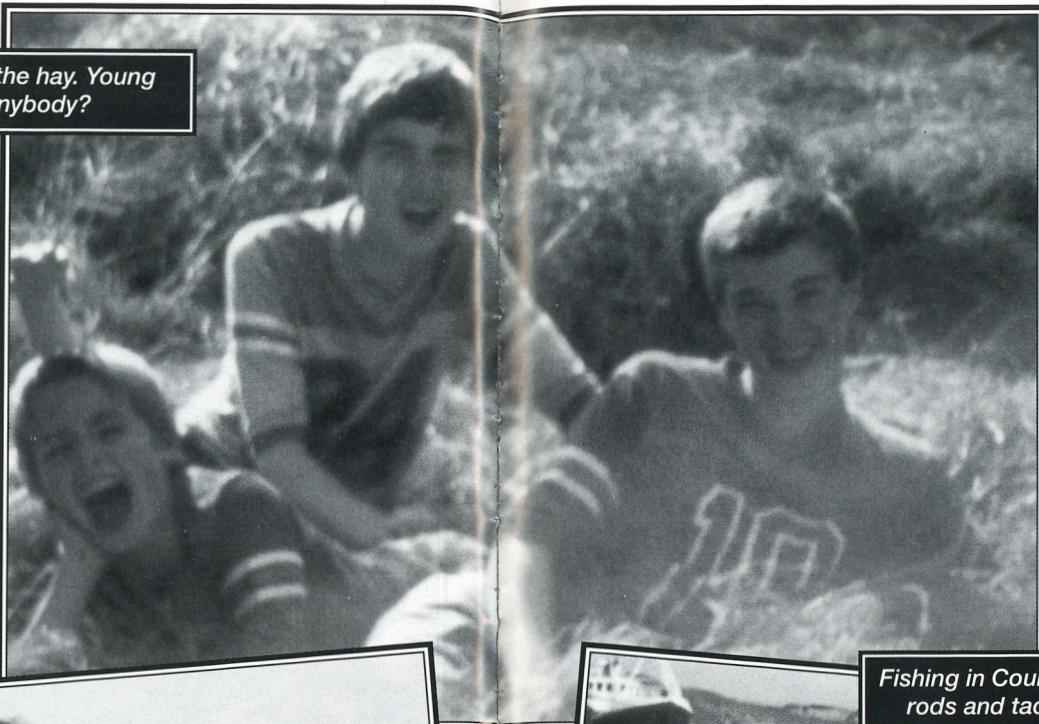


*Uncle Willie's wedding.  
Nice suits*

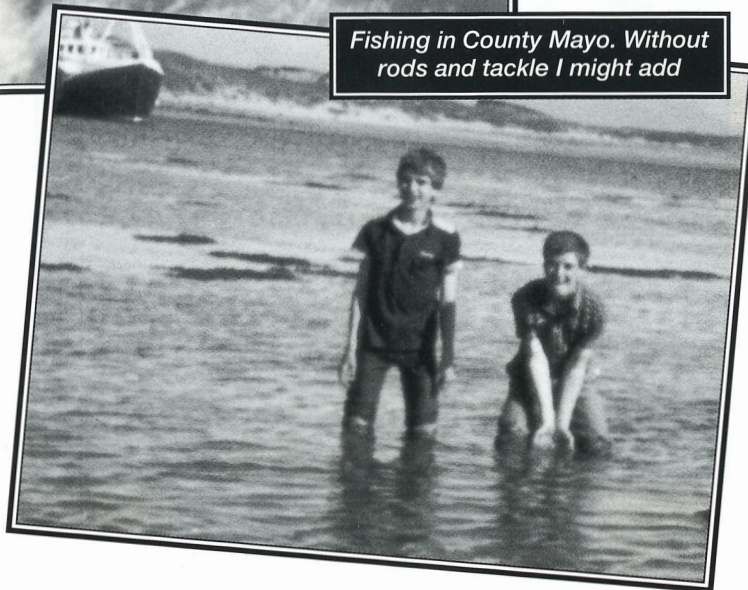




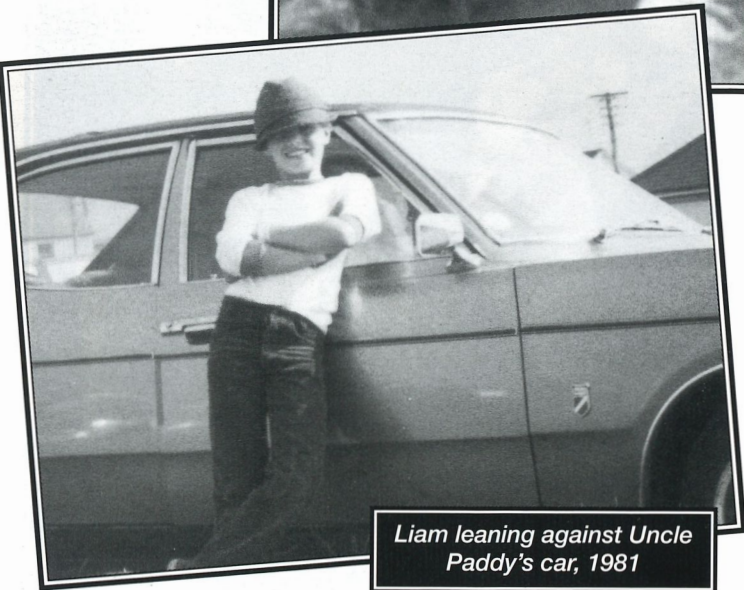
*Rolling around in the hay. Young  
Osmonds, anybody?*



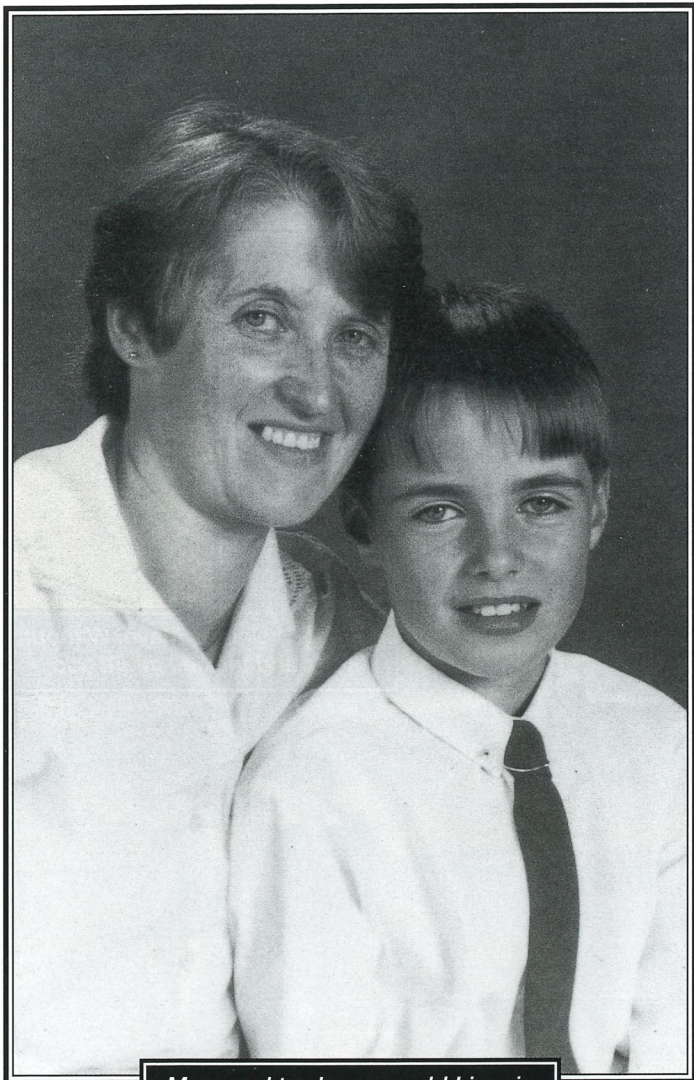
*Fishing in County Mayo. Without  
rods and tackle I might add*



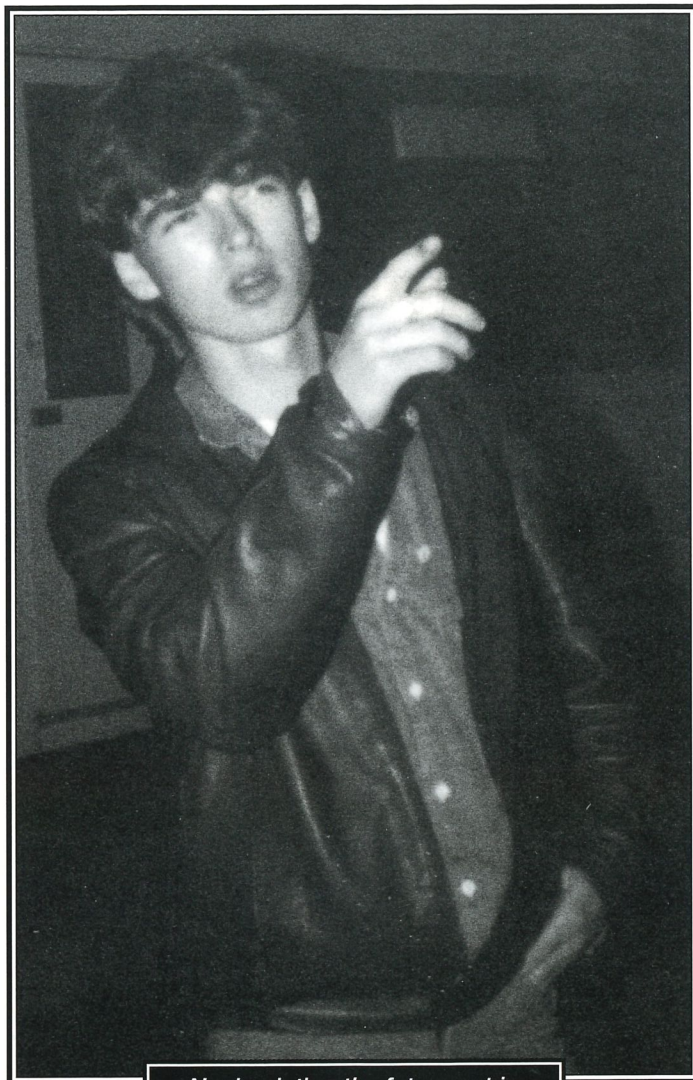
*Liam leaning against Uncle  
Paddy's car, 1981*







*Mam and twelve-year-old Liam in  
perfect family pose, 1984*



*Noel pointing the future out in  
1984*





*Liam aged fifteen plus offensive moustache*

jealous of that fact, but I suppose all siblings share a certain amount of jealousy about the craziest things. There being three of us, one always got singled out and picked on by the other two. At that time it was Liam, with him being the youngest and having replaced Noel as my mam's golden boy.

When I was eight years old, I had a three-wheeler bike. It wasn't a trike. It was fast, state of the art, and had a box on the back to put things in. It wasn't quite as speedy as the other kids with their Choppers or Grifters, but almost, though it didn't corner very well. My dad sent me to the shop with a £5 note to get him some cigarettes. I put the money in the pocket of my shorts and rode to the shops. On the way I hit a bump in the pavement, but thought nothing of it. When I got to the shop, in a blind panic I realised that the £5 note had dropped out of my pocket. I was in tears as I went over every bit of ground I'd ridden along. I had to find it. Tears stung my eyes, blurring my vision, making it even more difficult for me to search the pavement in a thorough and logical fashion. How could I possibly go home and face my dad without his cigarettes and more urgently, his £5 note? My anticipated punishment made it worse. 'Please God, St Anthony (patron saint of lost causes and to a kid patron saint of finding things from a 10p piece to a football sticker), please let me find his money.' It was hopeless. My chest was heaving and I was crying fit to burst when I wheeled my bike into our front garden. My dad was waiting for me because I'd been gone for some time. He accused me of stealing and spending his £5. My punishment followed. It was severe.

Growing up as kids with Irish parents was difficult because the Irish have their own traditions. You end up thinking that the kids who don't go to mass, don't eat a Sunday roast and don't have very strict parents

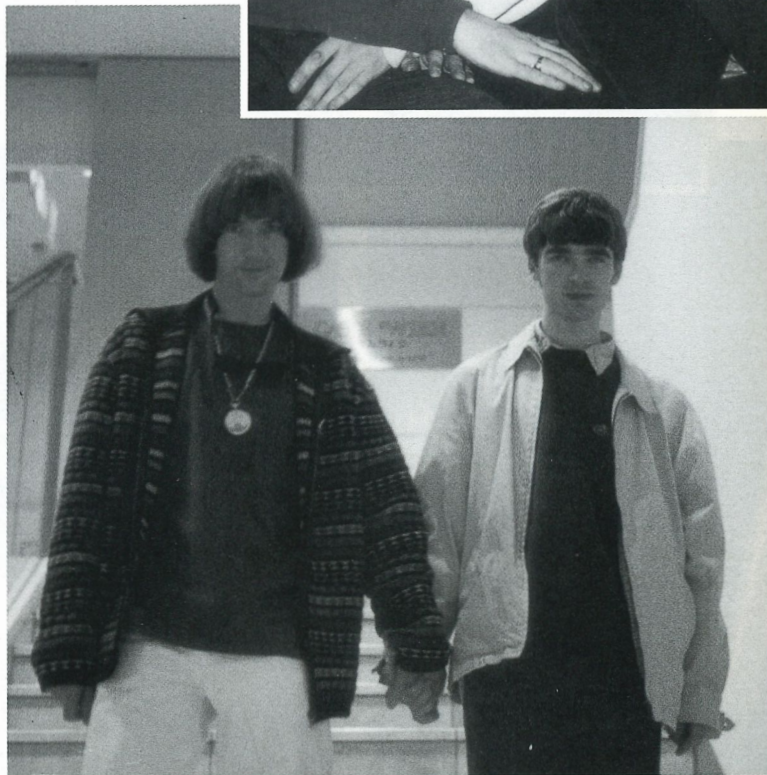


ter and bringing in their wake hordes of journalists and the like.

For the Creation Night at the Canal Cafe Bar, the line-up was 18 Wheeler, Oasis and Medarlark Eleven (another Manchester band signed to Creation who, in a former incarnation, had had some success as the Bodines). There were probably about 250 people crowded into the place, but it wasn't quite full. There was a good atmosphere and it's where I met Oasis manager, Marcus Russell, for the second time. He was in a buoyant mood. Most of the delegates from the music convention present were people from the industry in Manchester. The only national journalist there was Paul Mathur from *Melody Maker*, who came and introduced himself. Mathur, a tall, bespectacled Scouser, was blown away by the band. I don't know if he'd been tipped off about them by some of his mates in Liverpool, but I hadn't seen him at any gigs before this. He gave Oasis a brilliant review in *Melody Maker* which appeared two weeks later on 25 September, although he got the attendance figures completely wrong. I'm not sure if he realised that Emma Morgan from the *NME* had beaten him to a live review in a bigger paper two months earlier, or that Oasis had been well covered by the local press in Manchester. This might not have seemed a big deal to him, but the *Manchester Evening News* did have over a million and a half readers, figures which even the *NME* would dream about, never mind *Melody Maker*. The piece was headlined 'Desert Brats':

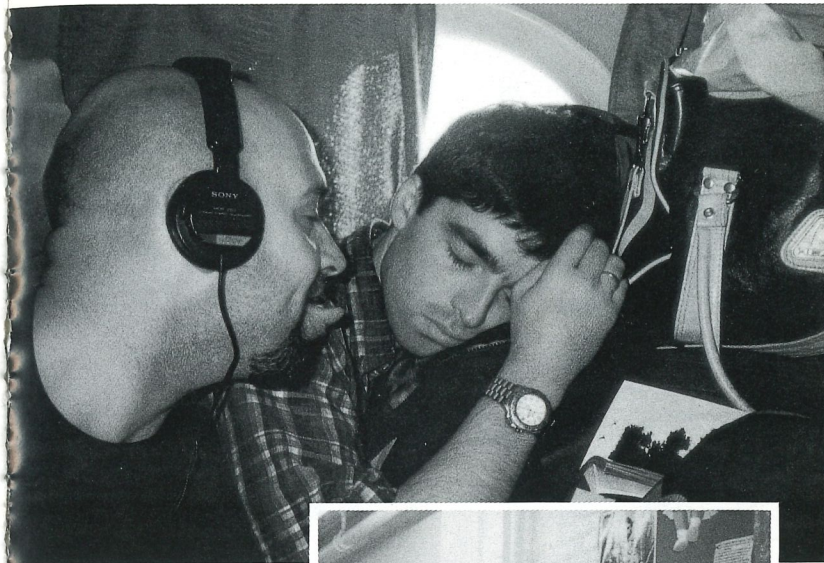
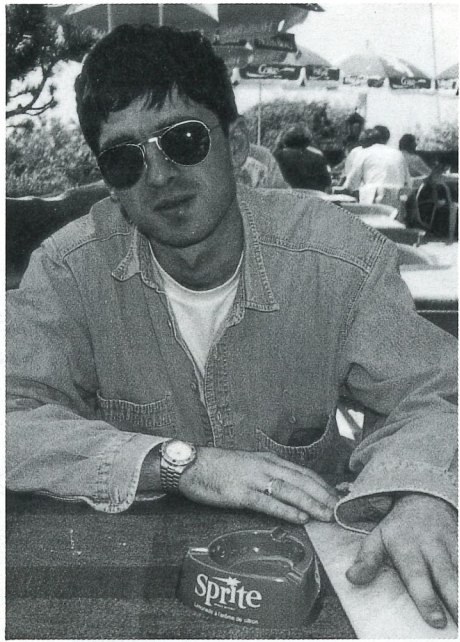
Creation Records choose to showcase some of their sparkling new signings at exactly the same time as some of the more established crowd-pullers are packing them in on the other side of town, meaning that less than a hundred people turn up to witness a searing show. In years to

*Just good friends.  
Noel and Clint  
Boon in their  
Inspiral Carpets  
days*

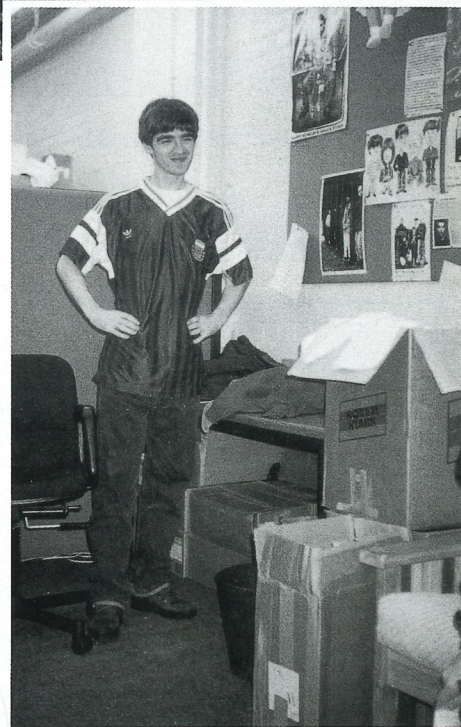
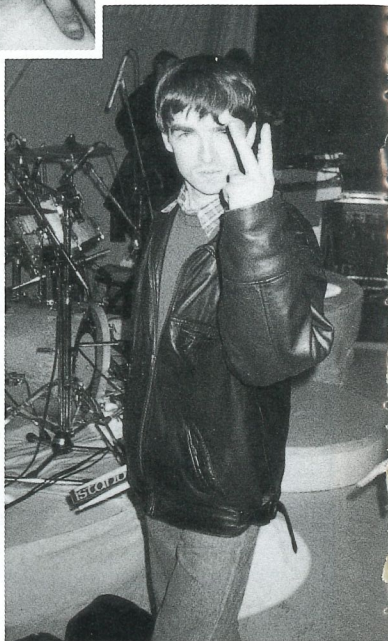




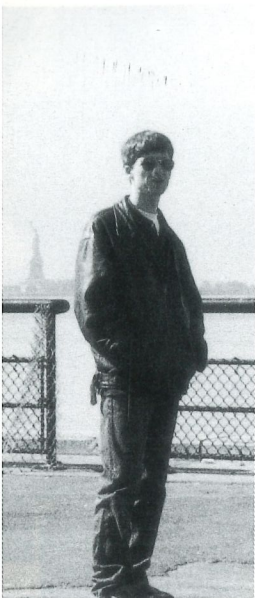
*Pop star in the making . . .*



*. . . although still only a roadie at the time*



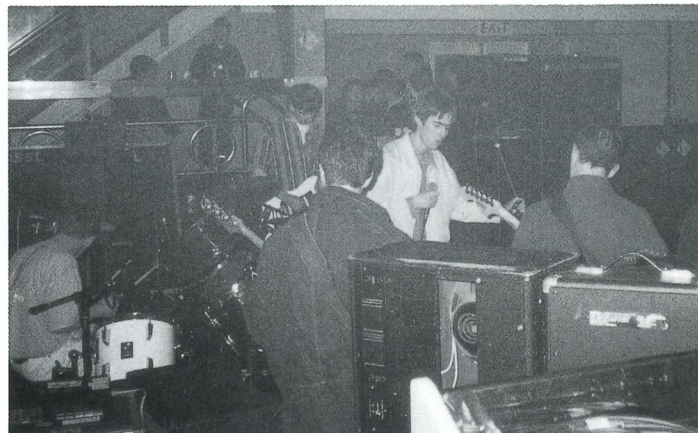




*Their own band at last. Oasis at the Middleton Hippodrome in 1992*



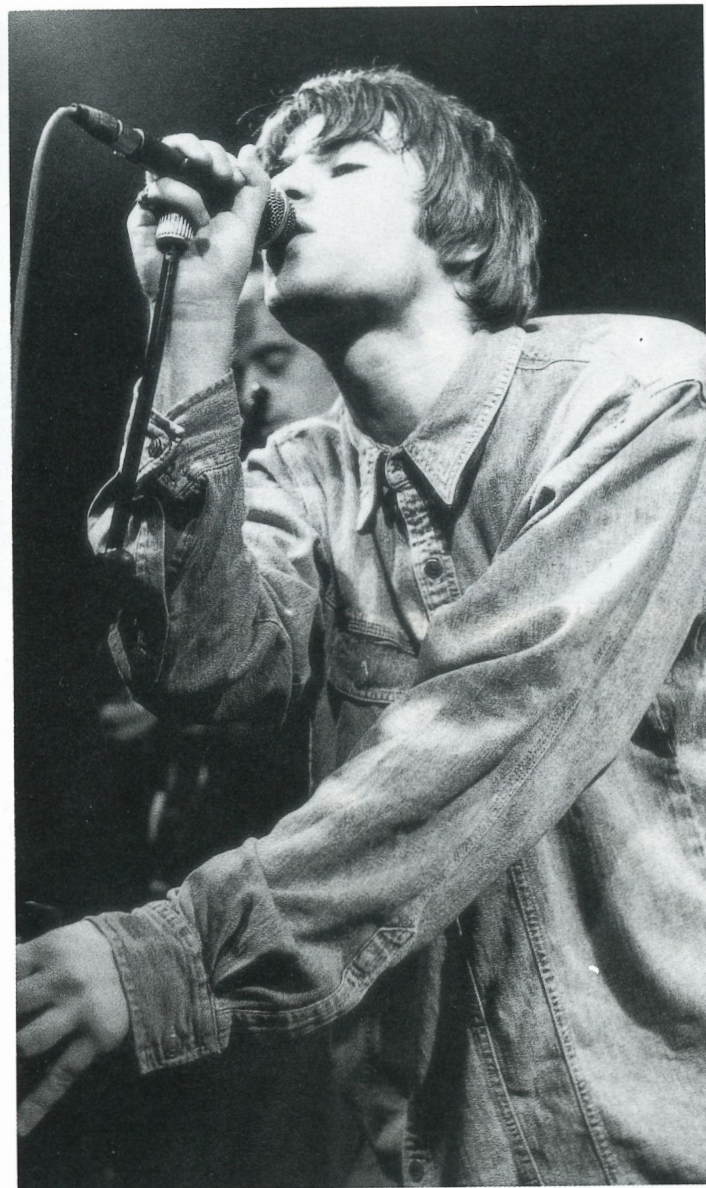
*Travelling the world with the Inspiral Carpets*







*'In The City' festival at the Venue, September 1992*



*Liam on stage at the Fleece and Firkin, Bristol, 1994*



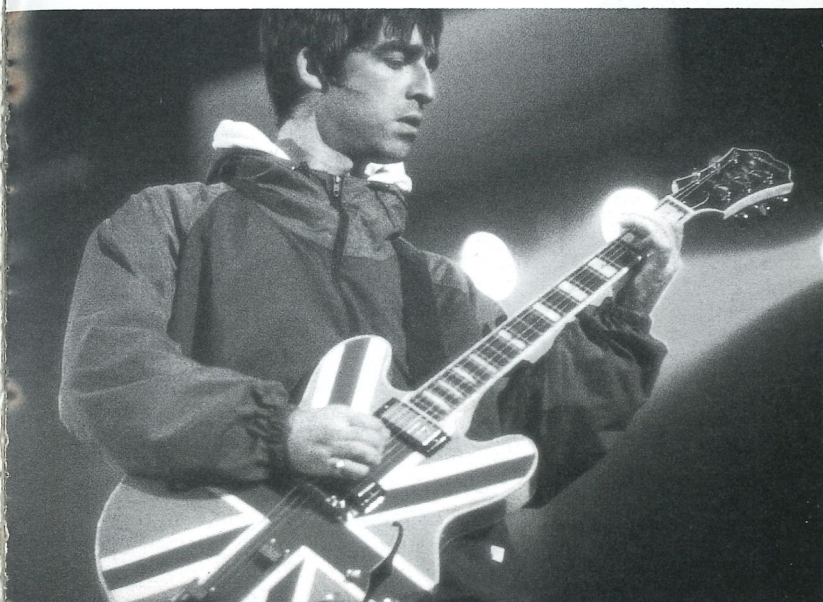


**Top left** With one of our kid's heroes, Paul Weller, in 1995

**Bottom left** The White Room, 1996

**Right** A far cry from their Boardwalk days. Earls Court, 1995

**Below** Playing at Maine Road, 1996



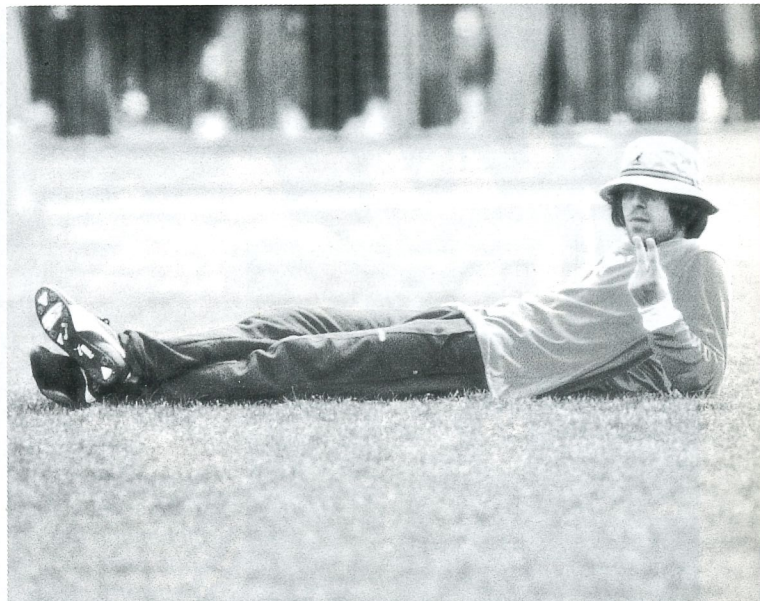




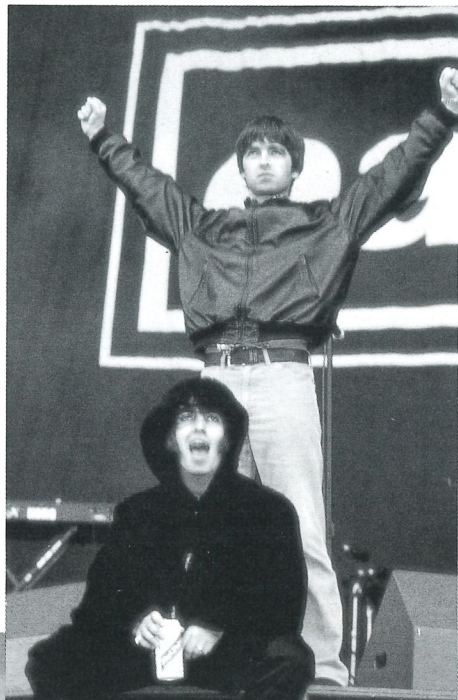
**Above** Shy and retiring as always. Mouthing off at the Brits in '96 (London Features)

**Top right** The Man City jinx collapses after a game of 'celebrity football' (London Features)

**Bottom right** Shopping in St Louis, USA, in 1996

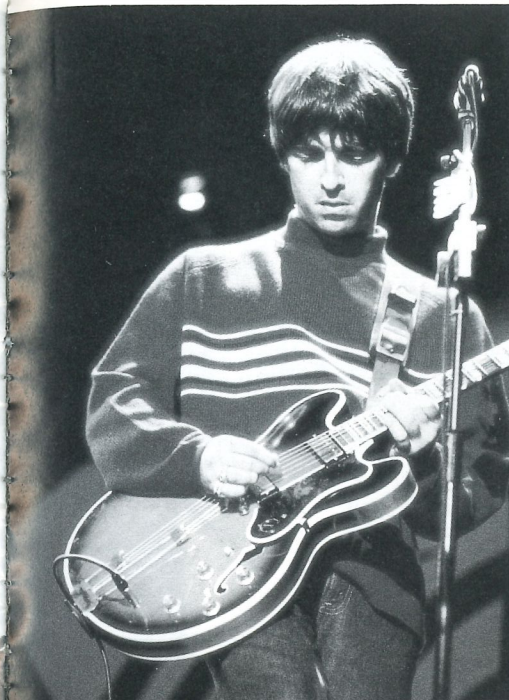
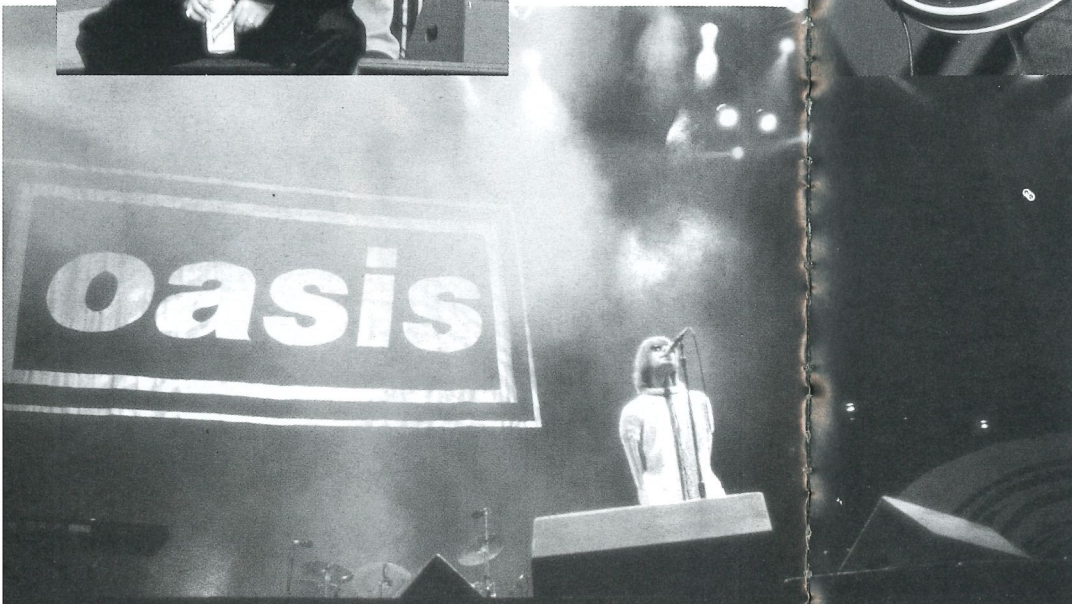






**Left** 'Are you mad for it, Scotland?' Loch Lomond, 1996 (London Features)

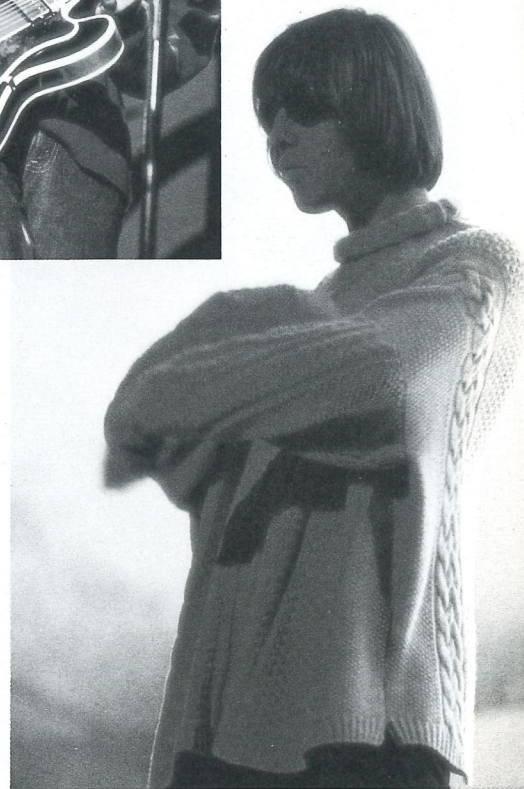
**Below** The greatest rock and roll band in the world play Knebworth, 1996



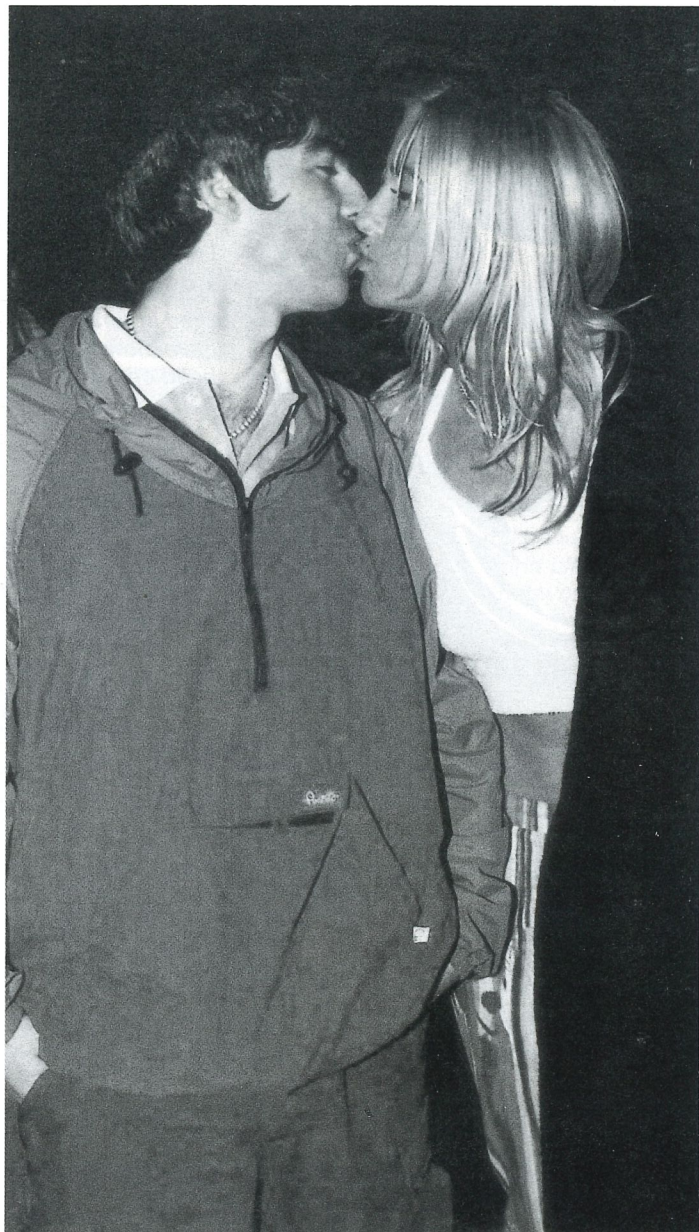
**Left and below** The loving brothers at Knebworth (London Features)

**Liam on Noel:** 'There's days he's needed a slap and I've given him one'

**Noel on Liam:** 'If I lived in America I'd have blown his head off by now'







**Above** Liam with fiancée Patsy Kensit

**Left** Noel with girlfriend Meg Matthews (Rex Features)



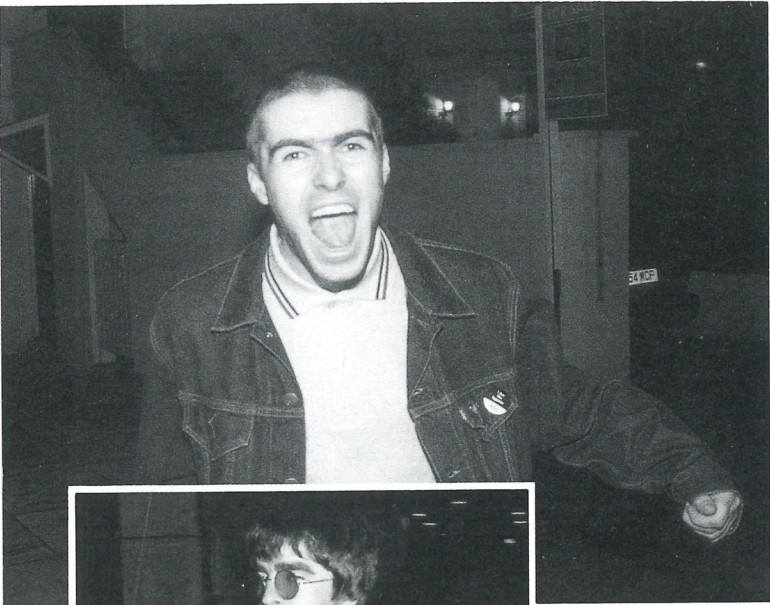
come, everyone will claim to have been here, but a word of warning, I've got all the ticket stubs. I know who you are.

Oasis are magnificent. I've been exploring their edges for three months now, watching them get ready to slay you, to obsess you, to prove themselves as – get ready for this – the best new band in Britain.

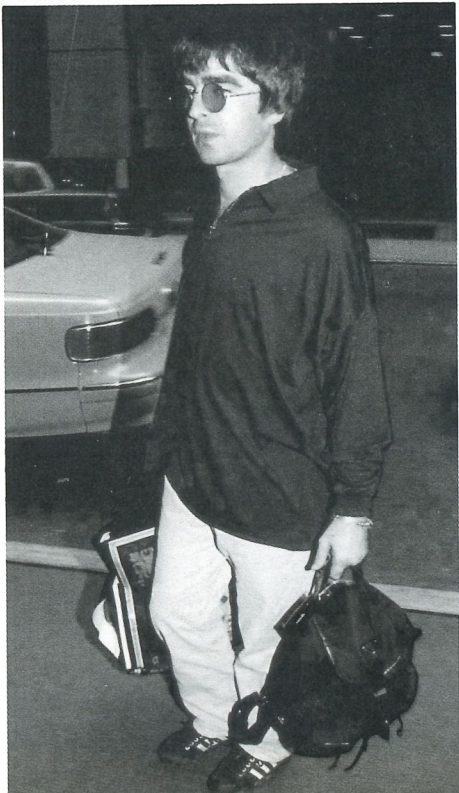
Let's get the sign posts out of the way first. The Stone Roses, Happy Mondays, the Sex Pistols – and oh, about a million others – have all played their part in creating the joy that is Oasis, but it's the way they pull their influences together and invest them with an exuberant menacing freshness that makes them so important. Oasis are the most natural stars I've seen in years.

Singer Liam lopes around the stage with the air of someone who was born to inhabit the space around the mike, guitarist Noel exuding similar ease as he hurls out waves of shimmer, rich sounds. The first song, 'Shakermaker', was apparently written 48 hours before they came on stage but it feels like they've lived with it for years.

At the time Oasis played the Creation Night, almost four months after the Glasgow gig, they still hadn't actually signed the contract. Noel was shrewd enough to get a manager first, and Oasis could easily have gone elsewhere, with labels like U2's Mother sniffing around and offering to double the advance offered by McGee. It wasn't until October 1993 that Oasis finally signed on the dotted line. I wonder if all the record company scouts present at the Canal Cafe Bar to see the band that had supposedly slipped through their net were aware of that.



**Above** Head first into 1997 (msi)



**Left** Noel looks pensive as the 1996 American tour comes to an abrupt end (Rex Features)